

Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11) EP 0 853 441 A2

(12) EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
15.07.1998 Bulletin 1998/29

(51) Int Cl.⁶: H04Q 11/04, H04L 12/56

(21) Application number: 97309154.9

(22) Date of filing: 13.11.1997

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU MC
NL PT SE
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(72) Inventor: Shinohara, Masayuki
Minato-ku, Tokyo (JP)

(74) Representative: Moir, Michael Christopher et al
Mathys & Squire
100 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8AL (GB)

(30) Priority: 13.11.1996 JP 300744/96

(71) Applicant: NEC CORPORATION
Tokyo (JP)

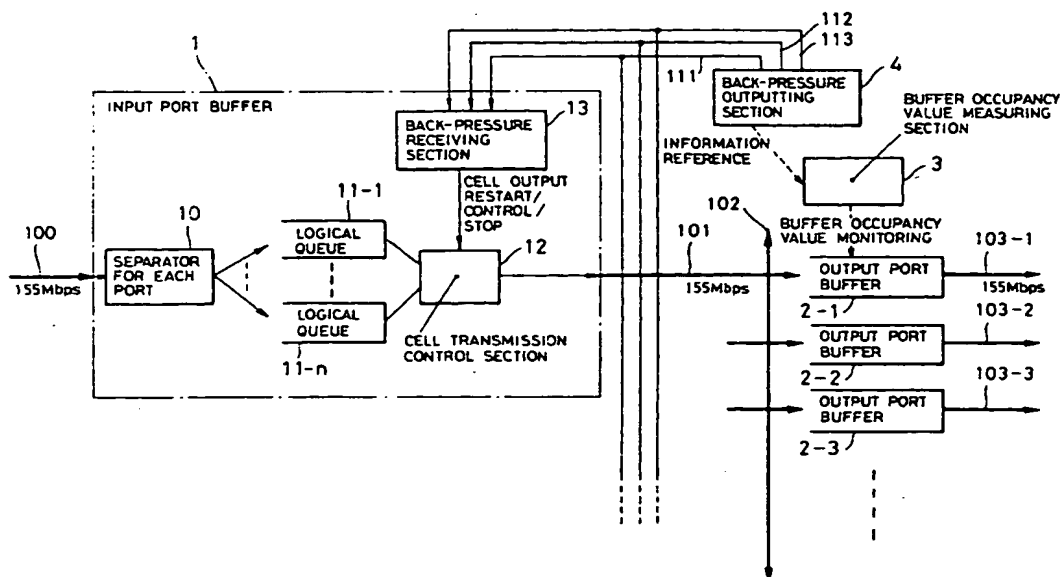
(54) Switch control circuit and switch control method of ATM switchboard

(57) Traffic control for controlling the occurrence of congestion in an ATM switchboard and assuring the throughput of VCs using the same output port.

A buffer occupancy value measuring section measures the queue length of each output port buffer and stores the data in a buffer occupancy value table. A back-pressure outputting section outputs a transmission restart signal when a queue length in the buffer occupancy table is equal to or less than a first threshold, a transmission control signal when the queue length is

between the first threshold and a second threshold, and a transmission stop signal when the queue length is equal to or more than the second threshold as the appropriate back pressure signal. A cell transmission control section transmits an ATM cell without comparing the cell transmission time with the present time if the instruction of a back pressure signal corresponding to a destination port indicates "restart" and transmits an ATM cell only if the transmission time is earlier than the present time if the instruction indicates "control".

FIG.1



EP 0 853 441 A2

Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a switch control circuit and a switch control method of an ATM switchboard, particularly to a switch control circuit and a switch control method of an ATM switchboard for switching an ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) cell between input and output ports.

Description of the Related Art

Conventionally, the above type of ATM switchboard, as shown in FIG. 16, comprises an input port buffer 5, output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n (output port buffers 2-4 to 2-n are not illustrated), a buffer occupancy value measuring section 3, and a back-pressure outputting section 6. Moreover, the input port buffer 5 comprises a separator 50 for each port, output port corresponding logical queues 51-1 to 51-n, a cell transmission control section 52, and a back-pressure receiving section 53. For the above ATM switchboard, a case is assumed in which one traffic class is used in order to simplify the description.

FIG. 17 is a flow chart showing the back-pressure control by the back-pressure outputting section 6 in FIG. 16. The cell switching operation of a conventional ATM switch board is described below by referring to FIGS. 16 and 17.

The destination output port of an ATM cell incoming from an input port 100 is identified by the separator 50 for each port in the input port buffer 5 and then stored in the proper output port corresponding to logical queues 51-1 to 51-n in accordance with the identified result. The cell transmission control section 52 controls transmission of the ATM cell in accordance with the rotation preferential control of cyclically carrying about a cell transmission right between the output port corresponding logical queues 51-1 and 51-n.

ATM cells fetched from the output port corresponding logical queues 51-1 to 51-n selected in accordance with the processing by the cell transmission control section 52 are stored in the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n corresponding to the destination output ports via an input port signal line 101 and a time-division multiplexing bus 102.

In the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n, cells are successively transmitted to output ports 103-1 to 103-n (output ports 103-4 to 103-n are not illustrated) starting with the first cell. The buffer occupancy value measuring section 3 observes the queue length of each of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n.

When the back-pressure outputting section 6 refers to the queue length information of each of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n of the buffer occupancy value measuring section 3 (step S31 in FIG. 17) and detects that the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n brought under a congested state because queue lengths exceed a preset threshold are present (step S32 in FIG. 17), it transmits a transmission stop (STOP) signal 113 specifying a congested output port and a transmission restart (GO) signal 111 specifying output ports other than the congested output port to all input port buffers 5 (steps S33 and S35 in FIG. 17).

Moreover, unless the back-pressure outputting section 6 detects the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n brought under a congested state because queue lengths exceed a threshold are present (step S32 in FIG. 17), it transmits the transmission restart (GO) signal 111 specifying all output ports to all input port buffers 5 (steps S34 and S35 in FIG. 17).

The back-pressure receiving section 53 receiving the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113 specifies an output port transmitting a back-pressure signal out of received back-pressure signal information and notifies the cell transmission control section 52 so as to inhibit transmission of cells from the output port corresponding logical queues 51-1 to 51-n corresponding to the output port.

When the congestion of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n is relieved, the back-pressure receiving section 53 transmits the transmission restart (GO) signal 111 specifying the output port and restarts the transfer of cells to those output ports to which transmission has been stopped.

As described above, to control the traffic between an input port and an output port of a conventional ATM switchboard, only the simple back-pressure control is present in which a back-pressure signal for commanding stop/restart of the output of a cell to a specified output port is issued to all input port buffers 5 in order to prevent a cell loss in the output port buffer of the output port when the specific output port is congested.

Moreover, for the input port buffer 5, a technique of strictly controlling transmission of cells by transmitting a cell from each logical queue and then computing the next cell transmission time can be considered instead of the rotation preferential control. Either of the following two cases are conventionally used:

- a) the above time of transmission is compared with the present time and cells are transmitted if the time of transmission is earlier than the present time, and
- b) cells are transmitted at random in accordance with a transmission time sequence without comparing the trans-

mission time with the present time.

Problems to be Solved by the Invention

In the case of the conventional back-pressure control described above, as soon as congestion due to simultaneous arrival of ATM cells at the same output port from a plurality of input ports, a transmission stop signal for preventing a cell loss in an output port buffer is output. Then, when the congestion is released and a transmission restart signal is output, the transmission stop signal is output again because the congestion due to the simultaneous arrival recurs since input port buffers simultaneously restart cell transmission.

As described above, in the case of the conventional back-pressure control, each input port buffer synchronously repeats transmission restart and transmission stop and therefore, the throughput from each input port to the same output port is uniform. Moreover, when the original traffic value bound for the same output port fluctuates between input ports, VCs (Virtual Channels) using the same output port may not be able to compensate the throughput at all even if they reserve bands.

In the case of the cell transmission control performed by an input port buffer, the transmission time for the next cell is computed whenever transmitting a cell. However, when the control is performed by continuously comparing the cell transmission time with the present time and transmitting a cell when its transmission time is earlier than the present time, a state arises in which no cell can be transmitted from an input port buffer although no output port buffer is congested. Therefore, a problem arises as the use of the output port buffer is inefficient.

When the control is performed without continuously comparing the cell(s) transmission time with the present time, the problem of inefficient use of an output port buffer is solved. However, congestion frequently occurs because cells are sent from an input port buffer at random and the problem due to the conventional back-pressure controls needs to be considered.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Therefore, it is an object of at least a preferred embodiment of the present invention to solve the above problems and provide a switch control circuit of an ATM switchboard capable of controlling congestion in the ATM switchboard and performing traffic control to assure the throughput of VCs using the same output port.

According to the present invention a switch control circuit of an ATM switchboard for switching an ATM cell transferred in an asynchronous mode between an input port and an output port, comprises an input port buffer and an output port buffer provided correspondingly to the input port and the output port respectively to perform ATM cell exchange between the input port and the output port; a back-pressure function for outputting any one of a transmission restart signal, transmission stop signal, and transmission control signal in accordance with the occupancy value of the output port buffer in order to prevent cells from being disused by the output port buffer; and cell transmission control means for performing control so as to transmit the ATM cell at a preset first rate to an output port for transmitting the ATM cell when the transmission restart signal is input from the back-pressure function correspondingly to the output port and transmit the ATM cell at a preset second rate to an output port for transmitting the ATM cell when the transmission control signal is input from the back pressure function correspondingly to the output port.

In another aspect of the present invention, a switch control method of an ATM switchboard for switching an ATM cell transferred in an asynchronous mode between an input port and an output port, comprises the first step of outputting any one of a transmission restart signal, transmission stop signal, and transmission control signal in accordance with the occupancy value of the output port buffer in order to prevent cells in an output port buffer provided correspondingly to the output port from being lost and the second step of performing control so as to transmit the ATM cell at a preset first rate to an output port for transmitting the ATM cell when the transmission restart signal is input in the first step correspondingly to the output port and transmitting the ATM cell to an output port for transmitting the ATM cell at a preset second rate, when the transmission control signal is input in the first step correspondingly to the output port.

That is, at least in preferred embodiments, the present invention is constituted so that a back pressure signal to be transferred between an input port buffer and an output port buffer uses such three types of signals as a transmission restart (GO) signal, transmission stop (STOP) signal, and transmission control (SHAPE) signal.

In the case of an input/output-buffer-type ATM switchboard provided with the back pressure control having the above structure, an input port buffer transmits a cell to an output port currently outputting a transmission restart signal at a first rate (R1) and transmits a cell to an output port currently outputting a transmission control signal at a second rate (R2).

When selecting the port maximum rate as the first rate (R1), the next cell transmission time is computed in accordance with the second rate (R2) whenever transmitting a cell from each logical queue by an input port buffer, a cell is only transmitted in accordance with a transmission time sequence while receiving a transmission restart signal, and a cell is transmitted in accordance with a transmission time sequence similarly to the above while receiving a trans-

mission control signal. However, the transmission time is always compared with the present time so as to transmit a cell only when the transmission time is earlier than the present time.

Thereby, the traffic control is realized which controls the occurrence of congestion in an ATM switchboard and assures the throughput of VCs during the same output port.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The objects, features and advantages of the preferred embodiments of the present invention will be further illustrated by way of examples, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the structure of an embodiment of the present invention;
 FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the structure of the cell transmission control section 12 in FIG. 1;
 FIG. 3 is an illustration showing an example of the logical queue list of the cell transmission control section in FIG. 1;
 FIG. 4 is an illustration showing an example of the information contents of the buffer occupancy value measuring section in FIG. 1;
 FIG. 5 is an illustration showing an example of threshold setting in the output port buffer in FIG. 1;
 FIGS. 6A and 6B are flow charts showing the back pressure control by the back-pressure outputting section in FIG. 1;
 FIGS. 7A, 7B and 7C are flow charts showing the cell transmission control by the cell transmission control section in FIG. 1;
 FIG. 8 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or less than the threshold for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal;
 FIG. 9 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or less than the threshold for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal;
 FIG. 10 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or more than the threshold for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and equal to or less than the threshold for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal;
 FIG. 11 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or more than the threshold for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and equal to or less than the threshold for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal;
 FIG. 12 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or more than the threshold for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and equal to or less than the threshold for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal;
 FIG. 13 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or more than the threshold for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and equal to or less than the threshold for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal;
 FIG. 14 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or more than the threshold for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal;
 FIG. 15 is a state diagram for explaining the processing procedure when the queue length of an output port of the ATM switchboard in FIG. 1 is equal to or more than the threshold for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal;
 FIG. 16 is a block diagram showing the structure of a conventional example; and
 FIG. 17 is a flow chart showing the back pressure control by the back-pressure outputting section in FIG. 16.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

An embodiment of the present invention is described below by referring to the accompanying drawings. FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the structure of an embodiment of the present invention. In FIG. 1, the ATM switchboard of the embodiment of the present invention comprises an input port buffer 1, output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n (output port buffers 2-4 to 2-n are not illustrated), a buffer occupancy value measuring section 3, and a back-pressure outputting section 4. Moreover, the input port buffer 1 comprises a separator 10 for each port, an output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n, a cell transmission control section 12, and a back-pressure receiving section 13.

The input port buffer 1 includes output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n corresponding to output ports 103-1 to 103-n (output ports 103-4 to 103-n are not illustrated) respectively to make queuing possible for each of the output ports 103-1 to 103-n.

By preparing the output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n for each traffic class, it is possible to easily provide a multitransport class environment. In the case of an embodiment of the present invention, it is assumed that one

traffic class is used in order to simplify the description. However, it is possible to prepare traffic classes corresponding to a desired number of service classes.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the structure of the cell transmission control section 12 in FIG. 1. In FIG. 2, the cell transmission control section 12 comprises a transmission control section 12a, a logical queue list 12b, a logical queue list control section 12c, a cell transmitting section 12d, a next transmission time computing section 12e, a band table 12f, and a clock section 12g.

While referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, the cell switching operation of the ATM switchboard of an embodiment of the present invention is described below. The input port buffer 1 identifies the destination output port of an ATM cell incoming from the input port 100 by the separator 10 for each port and stores the destination output port of the ATM cell in proper output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n in accordance with the identified result.

The cell transmission control section 12 transmits ATM cells from the output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n and then, computes the next time for transmitting ATM cells from the same logical queues by the next transmission time computing section 12e, and has the logical queue list 12b in which logical queues to be transmitted are arranged in order of time.

ATM cells fetched from the output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n located at the head of the logical queue list 12b are stored in the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n corresponding to their destination output ports via the input port signal line 101 and time-division multiplexing bus 102 from the cell transmitting section 12d of the cell transmission control section 12. The output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n successively transmit the ATM cells to the output ports 103-1 to 103-n starting with the first ATM cell.

FIG. 3 is an illustration showing an example of the logical queue list 12b of the cell transmission control section 12 in FIG. 1. In FIG. 3, the logical queue list 12b holds the position (first, second, or third), transmission time, class, and destination port of the logical queue on the list.

The next transmission time computing section 12e of the cell transmission control section 12 transmits ATM cells from the output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n respectively and then, computes the next transmission time for transmitting ATM cells from the same output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n. An example of the computation method is shown below.

For example, if the last computed time for outputting an ATM cell from a logical queue is denoted as T_{prev} and the band on a destination output port assigned to each connection stored in a logical queue is denoted as BW_i , the next transmission time T_{next} is computed in accordance with the following expression (1).

$$T_{next} = T_{prev} + 1/\Sigma BW_i \quad (1)$$

In this case, the band BW_i assigned to each connection is determined by call acceptance control before the connection is set so that the sum of assigned bands to which all connections are sent via a destination output port does not exceed the maximum band.

Transmission control is performed by equalizing a transmission interval ($= T_{next} - T_{prev}$) with the inverse number of the assigned band so that the destination output port is not congested. This is equivalent to comparing the cell transmission time with the present time to ensure the destination output port will not become congested.

FIG. 4 is an illustration showing an example of the information contents (buffer occupancy value table) of the buffer occupancy value measuring section 3 in FIG. 1. In FIG. 4, the occupancy value (queue length) of each of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n measured by the buffer occupancy value measuring section 3 is stored in a buffer occupancy value table 3a correspondingly to each of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n.

FIG. 5 is an illustration showing an example of threshold setting in the output port buffer 2-1 in FIG. 1. In FIG. 5, a threshold Q_{th_shape} for the back-pressure outputting section 4 to output a transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 and a threshold Q_{th_stop} for the back-pressure outputting section 4 to a transmission stop (STOP) signal 113 are set to the output port buffer 2-1.

FIGS. 6A and 6B are flow charts showing the back pressure control by the back-pressure outputting section 4 in FIG. 1 and FIGS. 7A, 7B and 7C are flow charts showing the cell transmission control by the cell transmission control section 12 in FIG. 1. While referring to FIGS. 1 to 7, the cell transmission control according to an embodiment of the present invention is described below. To simplify the description, it is assumed that only one traffic class is present.

The input port buffer 1 identifies the destination output ports of the ATM cells incoming from the input port 100 by the separator 10 for each port and stores them in proper output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n in accordance with the identified results.

The cell transmission control section 12 transmits ATM cells from the output port logical queues 11-1 to 11-n and then, computes the next time for transmitting ATM cells from the same logical queues using the next transmission time computing section 12e and has the logical queue list 12b in which logical queues to be transmitted are arranged in order of transmission time.

The ATM cells fetched from the output port corresponding logical queues 11-1 to 11-n located at the head of the logical queue list 12b are stored in the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n corresponding to their destination output ports from the cell transmitting section 12d of the cell transmission control section 12 via the input-port signal line 101 and the time-division multiplexing bus 102. The output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n successively transmit the ATM cells to the output ports 103-1 to 103-n starting with the first ATM cell.

The buffer occupancy value measuring section 3 measures the occupancy value (queue length) of each of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n and stores the measured queue lengths in the buffer occupancy value table 3a correspondingly to the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n respectively.

The back-pressure outputting section 4 refers to queue lengths Q_{out} in the buffer occupancy value table 3a of the buffer occupancy value measuring section 3 (step S1 in FIG. 6A) to judge whether the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} equal to or less than the threshold Q_{th_shape} prepared for the output ports 103-1 to 103-n respectively are present (step S2 in FIG. 6A).

When the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} equal to or less than the threshold Q_{th_shape} are present, the back-pressure outputting section 4 uses back pressure signals for the corresponding output ports 103-1 to 103-n as the transmission restart (GO) signal 111 (step S3 in FIG. 6A).

Unless there are the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} equal to or less than the threshold Q_{th_shape} , the back-pressure outputting section 4 judges whether the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} between the threshold Q_{th_shape} and the threshold Q_{th_stop} are present (step S4 in FIG. 6A).

When the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} between the threshold Q_{th_shape} and the threshold Q_{th_stop} are present, the back-pressure outputting section 4 uses back pressure signals for the corresponding output ports 103-1 to 103-n as the transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 (step S5 in FIG. 6B).

Unless the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} between the threshold Q_{th_shape} and the threshold Q_{th_stop} are present, the back-pressure outputting section 4 judges whether the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} equal to or more than the threshold Q_{th_stop} are present (step S6 in FIG. 6B).

When the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} equal to or more than the threshold Q_{th_stop} are present, the back-pressure outputting section 4 uses back pressure signals for the corresponding output ports 103-1 to 103-n as the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113 (step S7 in FIG. 6B).

Unless the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n having a queue length Q_{out} equal to or more than the threshold Q_{th_stop} are present or when back pressure signals for the corresponding output ports 103-1 to 103-n are used as the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113, the back-pressure outputting section 4 outputs the back pressure signals corresponding to the output ports 103-1 to 103-n to all the input port buffers 1 (step S8 in FIG. 6B).

When the back-pressure receiving section 13 of the input port buffer 1 receives back pressure signals from the back-pressure outputting section 4, the section 13 stores the back pressure signals in a back-pressure-signal receiving state (not illustrated) by making them correspond to the output ports 103-1 to 103-n and communicates instructions (restart, control, and stop) corresponding to the back pressure signals to the cell transmission control section 12.

The cell transmission control section 12 refers to the head of the logical queue list 12b (step S11 in FIG. 7A) and refers to the instruction from the back-pressure receiving section 13 corresponding to the destination port of the logical queue entered in the head of the logical queue list 12b (step S12 in FIG. 7A).

When the instruction from the back-pressure receiving section 13 corresponding to the destination port of the logical queue entered in the head of the logical queue list 12b is a restart instruction (step S13 in FIG. 7A), the cell transmission control section 12 transmits the ATM cell of the logical queue entered in the head of the logical queue list 12 (step S14 in FIG. 7A). In this case, the cell transmission control section 12 does not compare the transmission time or the ATM cell with the present time.

When the instruction from the back-pressure receiving section 13 corresponding to the destination port of the logical queue entered in the head of the logical queue list 12b is a stop instruction (step S15 in FIG. 7B) or the instruction is not a control instruction (step S17 in FIG. 7B), the cell transmission control section 12 refers to the next one in the logical queue list 12b (step S16 in FIG. 7B).

That is, when the instruction from the back-pressure receiving section 13 is a stop instruction, the cell transmission control section 12 completely stops the transmission of ATM cells to their destination port and refers to the next one in the logical queue list 12b. Moreover, when the instruction from the back-pressure receiving section 13 is not any one of a restart instruction, stop instruction, and control instruction, the cell transmission control section 12 decides the instruction as an error and refers to the next one in the logical queue list 12b.

When the instruction from the back-pressure receiving section 13 corresponding to the destination port of the logical queue entered in the head of the logical queue list 12b is a control instruction (step S17 in FIG. 7B), the cell transmission control section 12 refers to the transmission time of the logical queue entered in the head of the logical queue list 12b (step S18 in FIG. 7B) and transmits the ATM cell only when the transmission time is earlier than the present time sent from the clock section 12g (step S19 in FIG. 7B and step S20 in FIG. 7C). When the transmission time is not earlier than the present time, the cell transmission control section 12 refers to the next one in the logical

queue list 12b (step S16 in FIG. 7B).

Under an environment in which a plurality of traffic classes are present, it is possible to perform the control corresponding to various traffic-class quality requests by preparing an independent output port buffer for each traffic class or preparing a threshold of each back-pressure signal for every traffic class.

As described above, when the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n are not congested, the ATM switchboard of an embodiment of the present invention makes it possible to improve the utilization efficiency of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n by making the cell transmission control by each input port buffer 1 independent of the present time and thereby excessively transmitting ATM cells.

Moreover, by first outputting the transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 to the congested output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n and strictly comparing the cell transmission control by each input port buffer 1 with the present time to prevent the total number of cells addressed to the output ports 103-1 to 103-n of the input port buffer 1 from exceeding the maximum band and thereby, assuring the minimum band assigned through the call acceptance control, the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n are not further congested and therefore, it is possible to greatly decrease the output frequency of the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113. Thereby, it is possible to prevent the band non-assurance problem due to throughput averaging between the input port buffers 1 (which has been serious so far in the case of the back pressure control) from occurring by using only the transmission restart (GO) signal 111 and the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113.

FIGS. 8 and 9 are state diagrams for explaining a processing procedure by the ATM switchboard shown in FIG. 1 when the queue length Q_{out} of an output port #4 is equal to or less than a threshold Q_{th_shape} for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and FIGS. 10 and 11 are state diagrams for explaining a processing procedure by the ATM switchboard shown in FIG. 1 when a queue length Q_{out} of an output port #4 is equal to or more than a threshold Q_{th_shape} for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and equal to or less than a threshold Q_{th_stop} for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal.

Moreover, FIGS. 12 and 13 are state diagrams for explaining a processing procedure by the ATM switchboard shown in FIG. 1 when a queue length Q_{out} of an output port #4 is equal to or more than a threshold Q_{th_shape} for generating a transmission control (SHAPE) signal and equal to or less than a threshold Q_{th_stop} for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal and FIGS. 14 and 15 are state diagrams for explaining a processing procedure by the ATM switchboard shown in FIG. 1 when a queue length Q_{out} of an output port #4 is equal to or more than a threshold Q_{th_stop} for generating a transmission stop (STOP) signal.

The cell transmission control by an embodiment of the present invention is specifically described below by referring to FIGS. 8 to 15. In FIGS. 8 to 15, the ATM switchboard of an embodiment of the present invention including input ports 100-1 to 100-4 and output ports 103-1 to 103-4 uses 40 cells for the threshold Q_{th_shape} for outputting the transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 and 80 cells for the threshold Q_{th_stop} for outputting the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113 from the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n respectively.

Moreover, connections are used from the input ports (#1 to #4) 100-1 to 100-4 to the output port (#4) 103-4 one each. In the case of each reserved band, 80 Mbps (=188.4 cells/msec) is applied between the input port (#1) and the output port (#4)(VC1), 40 Mbps (=94.2 cells/msec) is applied between the input port (#2) and the output port (#4)(VC2), 20 Mbps (=47.1 cells/msec) is applied between the input port (#3) and the output port (#4)(VC3), and 10 Mbps (=23.6 cells/msec) is applied between the input port (#4) and the output port (#4)(VC4). The input ports 1-2 and 1-4 have the same structure as the input port 1-1 and the above band information is previously stored in the band table 12f of the cell transmission control section 12.

FIGS. 8 and 9 show the state when a logical queue (transmission time $t=550.0000$ msec) addressed to the output port (#4) in which the connection VC1 set between the input port (#1) and the output port (#4) is stored reaches the head of the logical queue list 12b of the cell transmission control section 12 of the input port (#1) at the present time ($t=500.0000$ msec).

In this case, because there is not any-other connection bound for the output port (#4) from the input port (#1), only the connection VC1 is stored in the logical queue. When referring to a back-pressure receiving state 13a of the back-pressure receiving section 13, neither transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 nor transmission stop (STOP) signal 113 are received from the output port (#4) [the queue length of the output port (#4) is 10 cells]. Therefore, the cell transmission control section 12 fetches an ATM cell from a logical queue in which VC1 is stored without comparing a transmission time with the present time and stores the ATM cell in the destination output port buffer 2-4 via the time division bus 102.

The next transmission time T_{next} of a logical queue addressed to the output port (#4) present at the head of the logical queue list 12b is computed by the next transmission time computing section 12e in accordance with the expression (1). That is, the next transmission time T_{next} is obtained as shown below.

$$\begin{aligned}
 T_{\text{next}} &= 550.0000 \text{ msec} + 1/188.4 \text{ cells/msec} \\
 &= 550.0053 \text{ msec}
 \end{aligned}$$

The cell transmission control section 12 instructs the logical queue list control section 12c to re-sort data in the logical queue list 12b in order of transmission time in accordance with the next transmission time T_{next} computed by the next transmission time computing section 12e.

FIGS. 10 and 11 show the state when a logical queue (transmission time $t=550.0000$ msec) addressed to the output port (#4) in which the connection VC1 set between the input port (#1) and the output port (#4) is stored reaches the head of the logical queue list 12b of the cell transmission control section 12 of the input port (#1) at the present time ($t=500.0000$ msec).

In this case, because there is not any other connection bound for the output port (#4) from the input port (#1), only the connection VC1 is stored in the logical queue. When referring to the back-pressure receiving state 13a of the back-pressure receiving section 13, the transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 is received from the output port (#4) [the queue length of the output port (#4) is 50 cells]. Therefore, the cell transmission control section 12 compares a transmission time with the present time.

In this case, because the transmission time ($t=550.0000$ msec) is later than the present time ($t=500.0000$ msec), the cell transmission control section 12 does not transmit any ATM cell to the output port (#4) from the logical queue but instead it checks the next entry in the logical queue list 12b.

FIG. 12 and 13 show the state when a logical queue (transmission time $t=550.0000$ msec) addressed to the output port (#4) in which the connection VC1 set between the input port (#1) and the output port (#4) is stored reaches the head of the logical queue list 12b of the cell transmission control section 12 of the input port (#1) at the present time ($t=560.0000$ msec).

In this case, because there is not any other connection bound for the output port (#4) from the input port (#1), only the connection VC1 is stored in the logical queue. When referring to the back-pressure receiving state 13a of the back-pressure receiving section 13, the transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 is received from the output port (#4) [the queue length of the output port (#4) is 50 cells]. Therefore, the cell transmission control section 12 compares a transmission time with the present time.

In this case, because the transmission time ($t=550.0000$ msec) is earlier than the present time ($t=560.0000$ msec), the cell transmission control section 12 transmits an ATM cell to the output port (#4) from the logical queue and then, computes the next transmission time and re-sorts data in the logical queue list 12b in order of transmission time.

FIGS. 14 and 15 show the state when a logical queue (transmission time $t=550.0000$ msec) addressed to the output port (#4) in which the connection VC1 set between the input port (#1) and the output port (#4) is stored reaches the head of the logical queue list 12b of the cell transmission control section 12 of the input port (#1) at the present time ($t=560.0000$ msec).

In this case, because there is not any other connection bound for the output port (#4) from the input port (#1), only the connection VC1 is stored in the logical queue. When referring to the back-pressure receiving state 13a of the back-pressure receiving section 13, the control stop (STOP) signal 113 is received from the output port (#4) [the queue length of the output port (#4) is 90 cells]. Therefore, the cell transmission control section 12 does not transmit any ATM cell from the logical queue to the output port (#4) but it checks the next entry in the logical queue list 12b.

Thus, when the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n are not congested, it is possible to improve the utilization efficiency of the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n by making the cell transmission control by each of the input port buffers 1 and 1-1 to 1-4 independent of the present time and thereby prevent excessive transmission of ATM cells.

Moreover, when the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n are congested, the transmission control (SHAPE) signal 112 is output and the cell transmission control by each of the input port buffers 1 and 1-1 to 1-4 is strictly compared with the present time so that the total number of cells addressed to the output ports 103-1 to 103-n corresponding to the congested output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n does not exceed the maximum band. Thereby, by assuring the minimum band assigned by the call acceptance control, the output port buffers 2-1 to 2-n are not further congested and thus, it is possible to greatly decrease the output frequency of the transmission stop (STOP) signal 113.

Thereby, it is possible to prevent the band non-assurance problem due to throughput averaging between the input port buffers 1 and 1-1 to 1-4 (which has been serious so far in the case of the back pressure control) from occurring by using only the transmission restart (GO) signal 111 and the transmission, stop (STOP) signal 113.

As described hereinabove, according to the embodiment of the present invention, a switch control circuit of an ATM switchboard for switching ATM cells transferred in an asynchronous mode between an input port and an output port realizes the traffic control for controlling occurrence of congestion in the ATM switchboard; assures the throughput of VCs using the same output port by using an input port buffer and an output port buffer for exchanging ATM cells

between the input port and the output port; outputs any one of a transmission restart signal, transmission stop signal, and transmission control signal from a back-pressure function in accordance with an output port buffer occupancy value in order to prevent cells from being disused in the output port buffer; and performs traffic control so as to transmit ATM cells at a preset first rate to the output port when a transmission restart signal is input from the back pressure function correspondingly to the output port for transmitting ATM cells; and so as to transmit ATM cells at a preset second rate to the output port when a transmission control signal is input from the back pressure function correspondingly to an output port for transmitting ATM cells.

Although the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments, this description is not meant to be constructed in a limited sense. Various modifications of the disclosed embodiment will become apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to the description of the invention. It is therefore apparent that the appended claims will cover any modifications or embodiments as fall within the scope of the invention.

Each feature disclosed in this specification (which term includes the claims) and/or shown in the drawings may be incorporated in the invention independently of other disclosed and/or illustrated figures.

The text of the abstract filed herewith is repeated here as part of the specification. Traffic control for controlling the occurrence of congestion in an ATM switchboard and assuring the throughput of VCs using the same output port.

A buffer occupancy value measuring section measures the queue length of each output port buffer and stores the data in a buffer occupancy value table. A back-pressure outputting section outputs a transmission restart signal when a queue length in the buffer occupancy table is equal to or less than a first threshold, a transmission control signal when the queue length is between the first threshold and a second threshold, and a transmission stop signal when the queue length is equal to or more than the second threshold as the appropriate back pressure signal. A cell transmission control section transmits an ATM cell without comparing the cell transmission time with the present time if the instruction of a back pressure signal corresponding to a destination port indicates "restart" and transmits an ATM cell only if the transmission time is earlier than the present time if the instruction indicates "control".

Claims

1. A switch control circuit of an ATM switchboard for switching ATM cells transferred in an asynchronous mode between an input port and an output port, said circuit comprising an input port buffer and an output port buffer provided correspondingly to said input port and said output port respectively to perform ATM cell exchange between said input port and said output port; a back-pressure function for outputting any one of a transmission restart signal, transmission stop signal, and transmission control signal in accordance with said occupancy value of said output port buffer in order to prevent cells from being unused by said output port buffer; and cell transmission control means to transmit said ATM cells at a preset first rate to an output port, when said transmission restart signal is input from said back-pressure function corresponding to said output port and to transmit said ATM cells at a preset second rate to an output port when said transmission control signal is input from said back pressure function correspondingly to said output port.
2. The switch control circuit according to claim 1, wherein said back pressure function is constituted so as to output any one of said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, and said transmission control signal correspondingly to said output port.
3. The switch control circuit according to claim 1, wherein said back pressure function is constituted so as to output said transmission restart signal when the occupancy value of said output port buffer is less than a preset first threshold, said transmission control signal when the occupancy value of said output port buffer is between said first threshold and a preset second threshold, and said transmission stop signal when the occupancy value of said output port buffer is equal to or more than said second threshold.
4. The switch control circuit according to claim 1, wherein said cell transmission control means includes comparison means for comparing the present time with a scheduled transmission time computed in accordance with said second rate when transmitting said ATM cells at said second rate and means for performing control by said comparison means so as to transmit said ATM cells when said scheduled transmission time is earlier than said present time.
5. The switch control circuit according to claim 1, wherein said cell transmission control means includes means for performing control so as to transmit said ATM cells at the maximum rate in order of scheduled transmission time computed in accordance with said second rate independently of the present time when transmitting said ATM cells at said first rate.

6. The switch control circuit according to claim 1, wherein said cell transmission control means includes time computing means for computing a scheduled transmission time of an ATM cell.

7. The switch control circuit according to claim 1, wherein said cell transmission control means has a list in which said ATM cells to be transmitted are arranged in order of scheduled transmission time and in which said cell transmission control controls the transmission of an ATM cell at the head of the list in accordance with a signal obtained from said back pressure function.

8. The switch control circuit according to claim 3, wherein said back pressure function first checks whether said output port buffer has an occupancy value less than said first threshold, then checks whether said output port buffer has an occupancy value between said first threshold and said second threshold, and finally checks whether said output port buffer has an occupancy value equal to or more than said second threshold.

9. The switch control circuit according to claim 8, wherein said back pressure function outputs a transmission stop signal corresponding to said output port buffer to said cell transmission control means when said output port buffer has an occupancy value equal to or more than the said second threshold and thereafter, outputs any one of said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, and said transmission control signal corresponding to each output port buffer again.

10. The switch control circuit according to claim 8, wherein said back pressure function outputs any one of said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, and said transmission control signal corresponding to each output port buffer again when not one of said output buffers has an occupancy value equal to or more than said second threshold.

11. The switch control circuit according to claim 7, wherein said transmission control means stop the transmission of said ATM cells and controls the transmission of an ATM cell next located in said list in accordance with a signal obtained from said back pressure function when said transmission stop signal is input to said cell transmission control means by said back pressure function.

12. The switch control circuit according to claim 7, wherein said cell transmission control means decides that a case in which said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, or said transmission control signal is not input to said cell transmission control means by said back pressure function is an error and controls the transmission of the next ATM cell in said list in accordance with a signal obtained from said back pressure function.

13. A switch control method for an ATM switchboard for switching an ATM cell transferred in an asynchronous mode between an input port and an output port, the method comprising the first step of outputting any one of a transmission restart signal, transmission stop signal, and transmission control signal in accordance with the occupancy value of said output port buffer in order to prevent cells in said output port buffer from being discarded and the second step of performing control so as to transmit said ATM cell at a preset first rate to an output port when said transmission restart signal is input in said first step and transmitting said ATM cell to an output port at a preset second rate when said transmission control signal is input in said first step.

14. A traffic control method for controlling congestion in an ATM switchboard, comprising:

measuring the queue length of each output port buffer and storing the buffer occupancy value in a buffer occupancy table;
outputting a back-pressure control signal wherein said back-pressure control signal is a transmission restart signal when the buffer occupancy value is equal to or less than a threshold, is a transmission control signal when the buffer value is between the first threshold and a second threshold, and is a transmission stop signal when the buffer value exceeds a second threshold value;
transmitting a cell without examining its transmission scheduled time if the back-pressure signal indicates "restart" for the destination port; and
transmitting a cell only at its scheduled transmission time if the back-pressure signal indicates "control".

15. The switch control method according to claim 13, wherein said first step is constituted so as to output said transmission restart signal when the occupancy value of said output port buffer is less than a preset first threshold, said transmission control signal when the occupancy value of said output port buffer is between said first threshold and a preset second threshold, and said transmission stop signal when the occupancy value of said output port buffer

is equal to or more than said second threshold.

- 5 16. The switch control method according to claim 13, wherein said second step includes comparing the present time with a scheduled transmission time computed in accordance with said second rate when transmitting said ATM cells at said second rate and performing control so as to transmit said ATM cells when said scheduled transmission time is earlier than said present time in said third step.
- 10 17. The switch control method according to claim 13, wherein said second step includes transmitting said ATM cells at the highest rate of scheduled transmission time computed in accordance with said second rate independently of the present time when transmitting said ATM cells at said first rate.
18. The switch control method according to claim 13, wherein said second step includes transmitting said ATM cells and thereafter computing the scheduled transmission time of the next ATM cell to be transmitted.
- 15 19. The switch control method according to claim 13, wherein said second step includes generating a list by arranging said ATM cells to be transmitted in order of scheduled transmission time and the eighth step of controlling the transmission of an ATM cell located at the head of the list in accordance with a signal obtained from said first step.
- 20 20. The switch control method according to claim 13, wherein said first step first includes checking whether said output port buffer has an occupancy value less than said first threshold, then checks whether said output port buffer has an occupancy value between said first threshold and said second threshold, and finally checks whether said output port buffer has an occupancy value equal to or more than said second threshold.
- 25 21. The switch control method according to claim 20, wherein said first step includes outputting a transmission stop signal corresponding to said output port buffer when said output port buffer has - an occupancy value equal to or more than said second threshold and thereafter, outputs any one of said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, and said transmission control signal corresponding to each output port buffer again.
- 30 22. The switch control method according to claim 20, wherein said first step includes outputting again any one of said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, and said transmission control signal corresponding to each output port buffer when not one of said output buffers has an occupancy value equal to or more than said second threshold.
- 35 23. The switch control method according to claim 19, wherein said second step includes stopping the transmission of said ATM cells when said transmission stop signal is input and controls the transmission of an ATM cell next located in said list in accordance with a signal obtained from said first step.
- 40 24. The switch control method according to claim 19, wherein said second step decides that a case in which said transmission restart signal, said transmission stop signal, or said transmission control signal is not input is an error and controls the transmission of the next ATM cell in said list in accordance with a signal obtained from said first step.

FIG.1

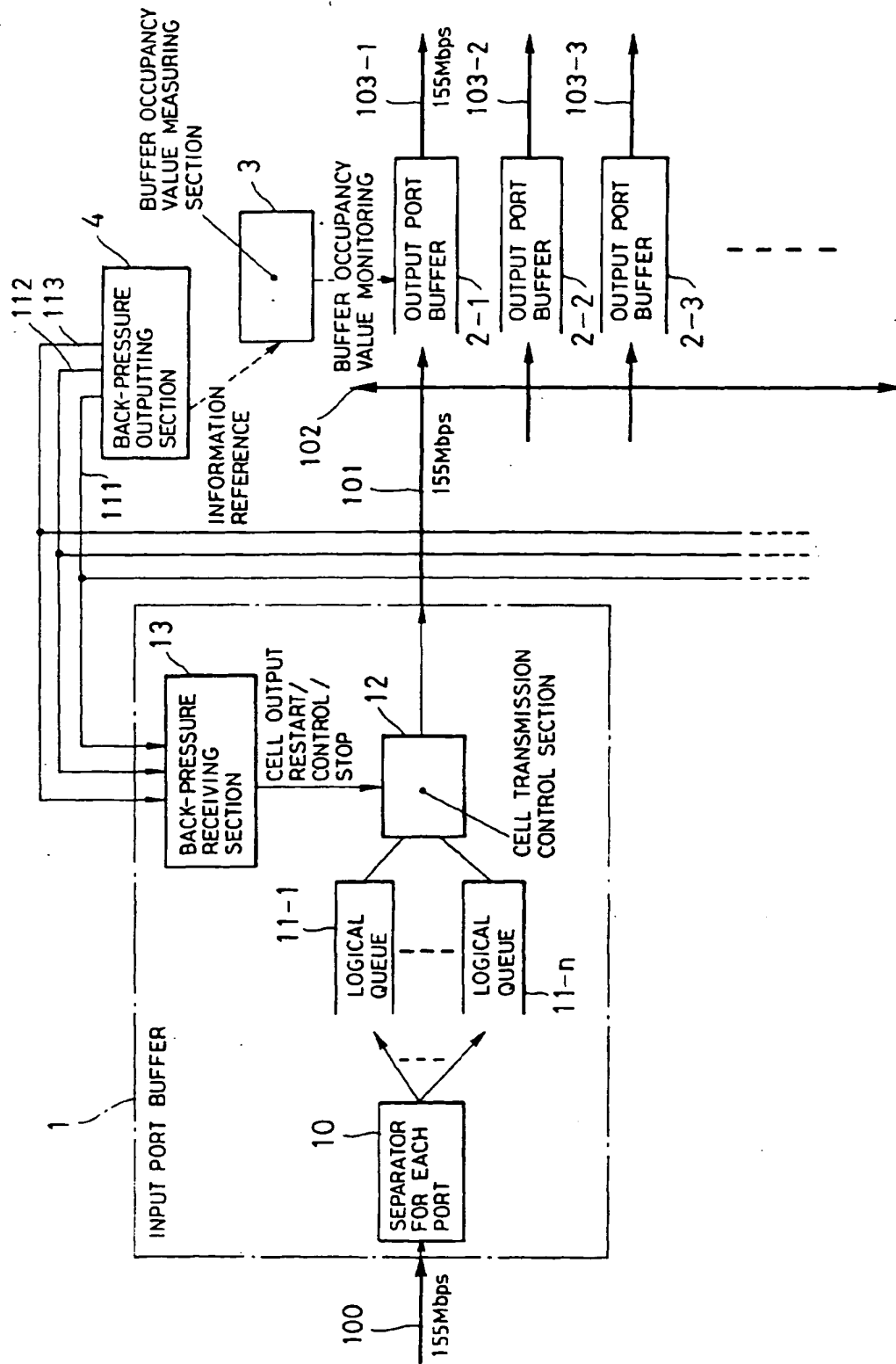


FIG. 2

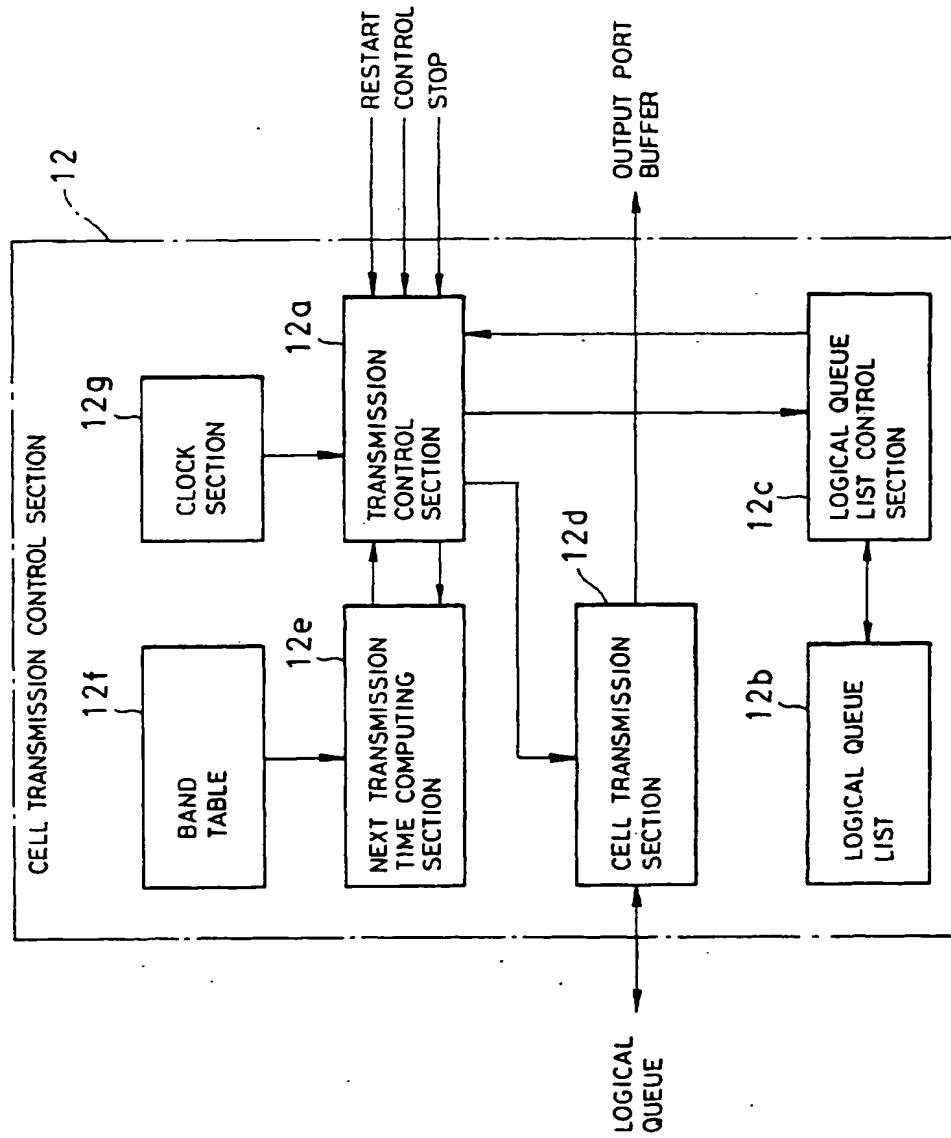


FIG. 3

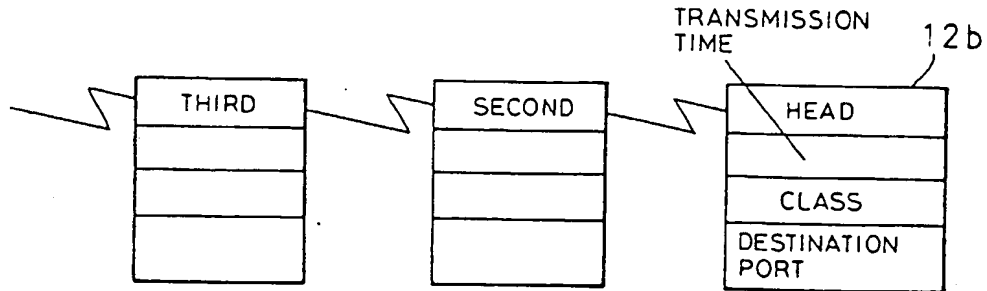


FIG. 4

3a

OUTPUT PORT	OCCUPANCY VALUE

FIG. 5

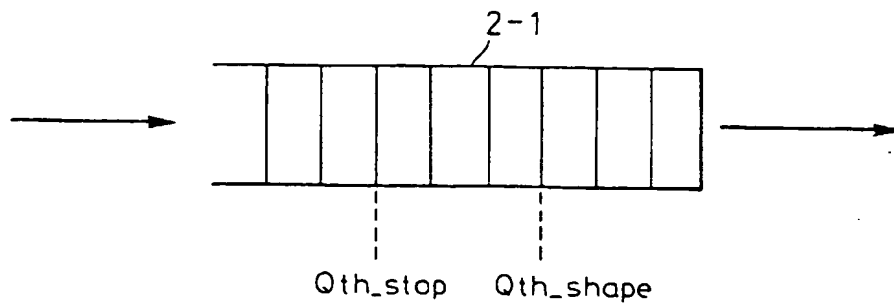


FIG. 6A

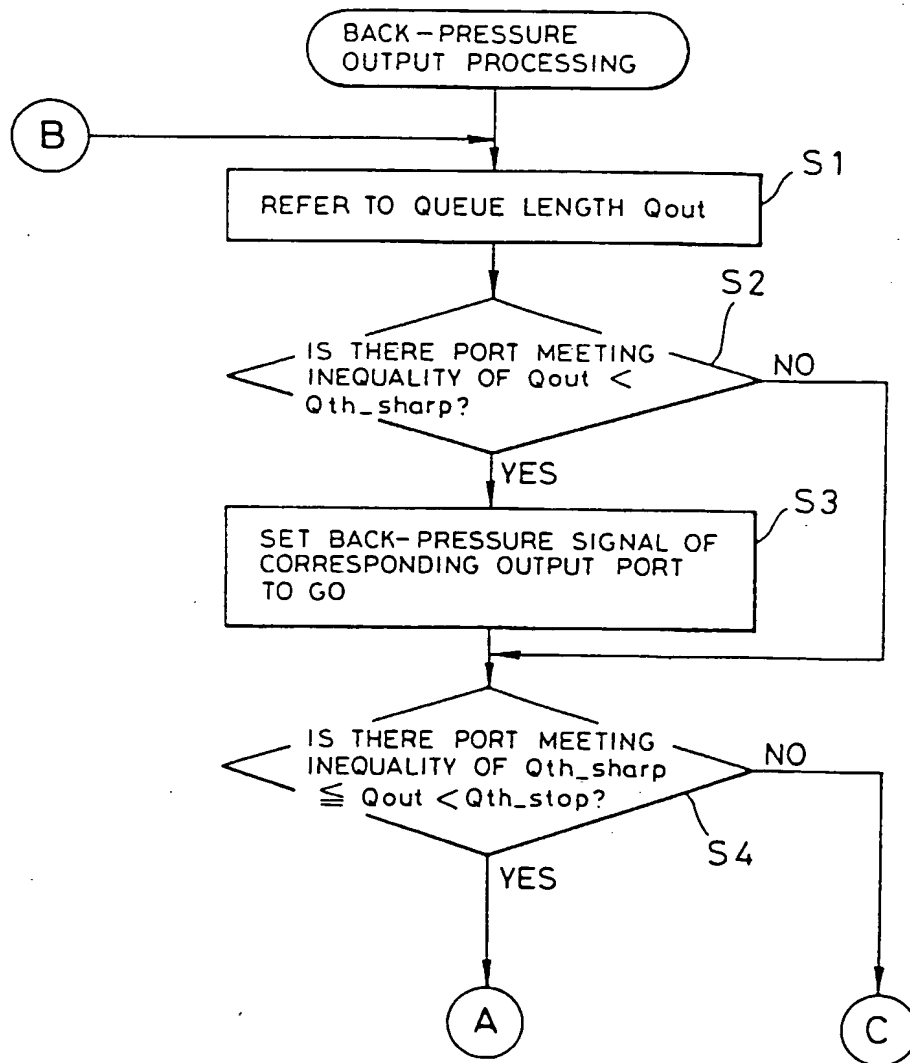


FIG. 6B

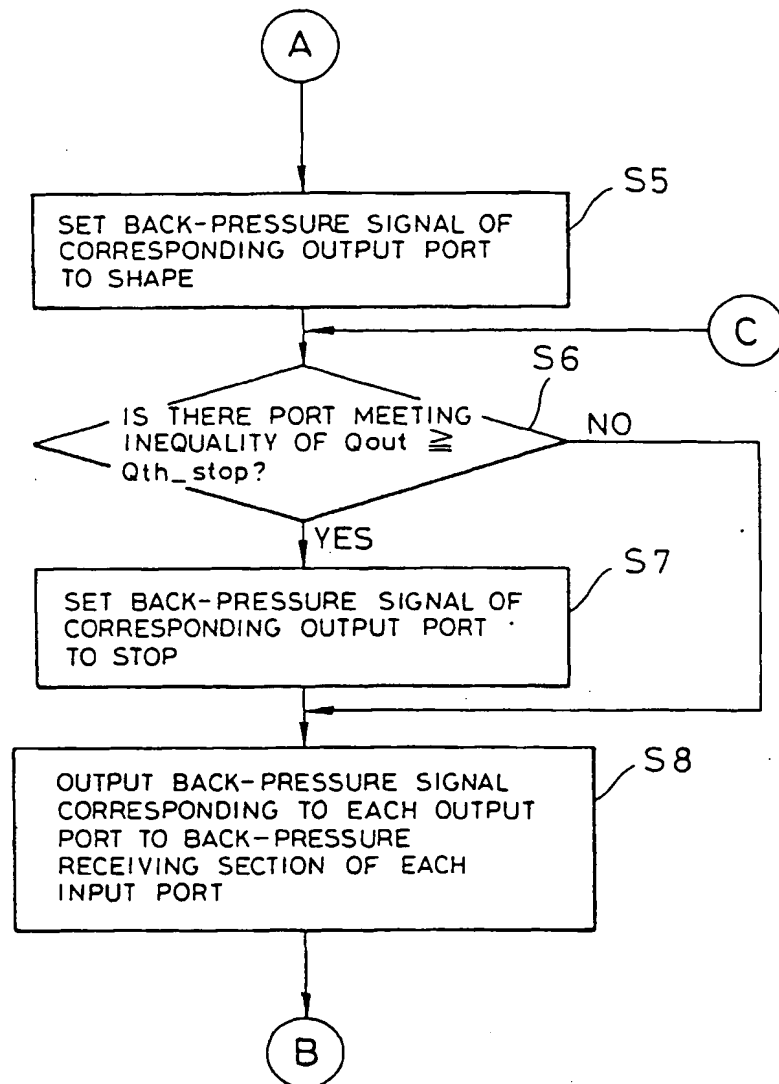


FIG. 7A

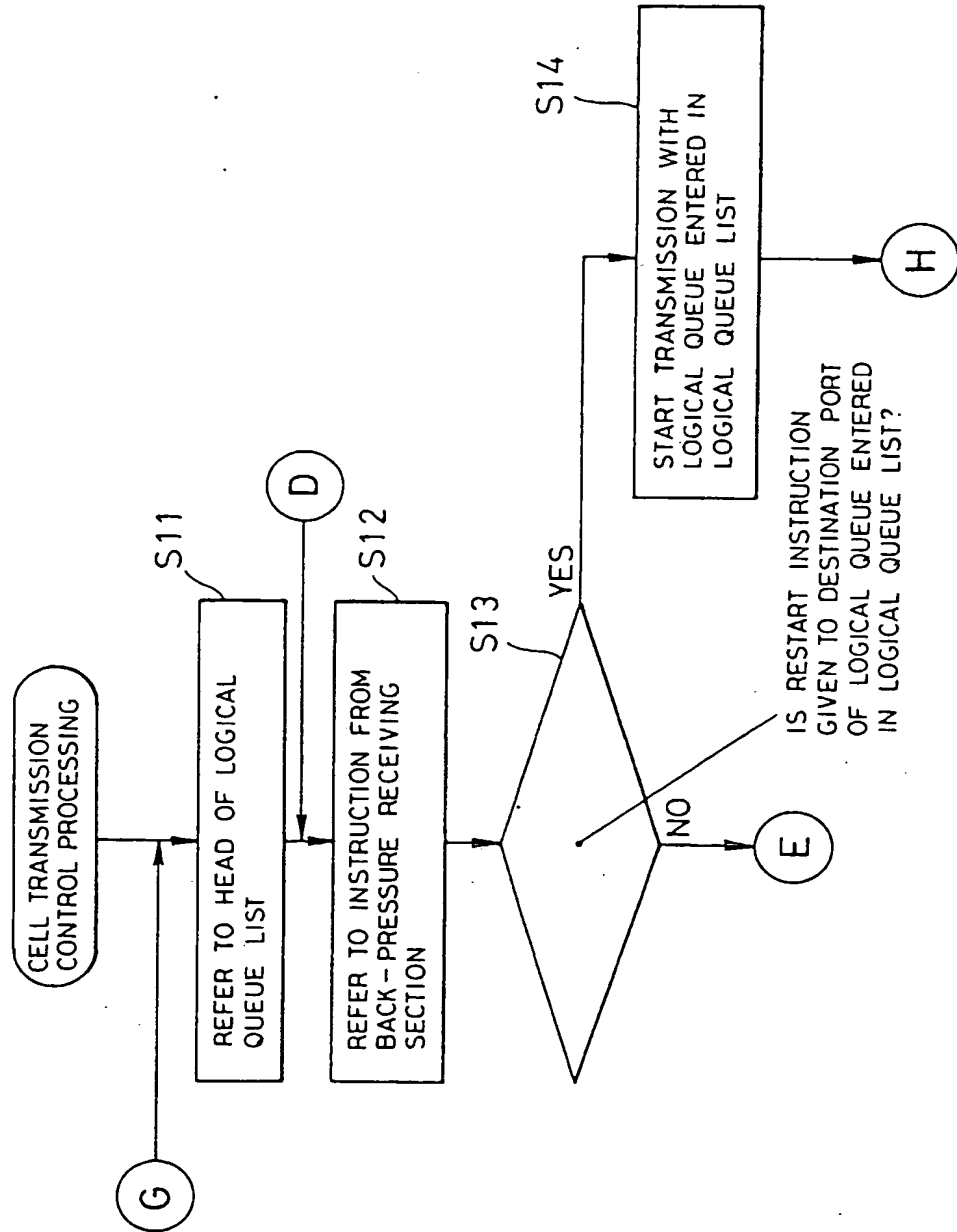


FIG. 7B

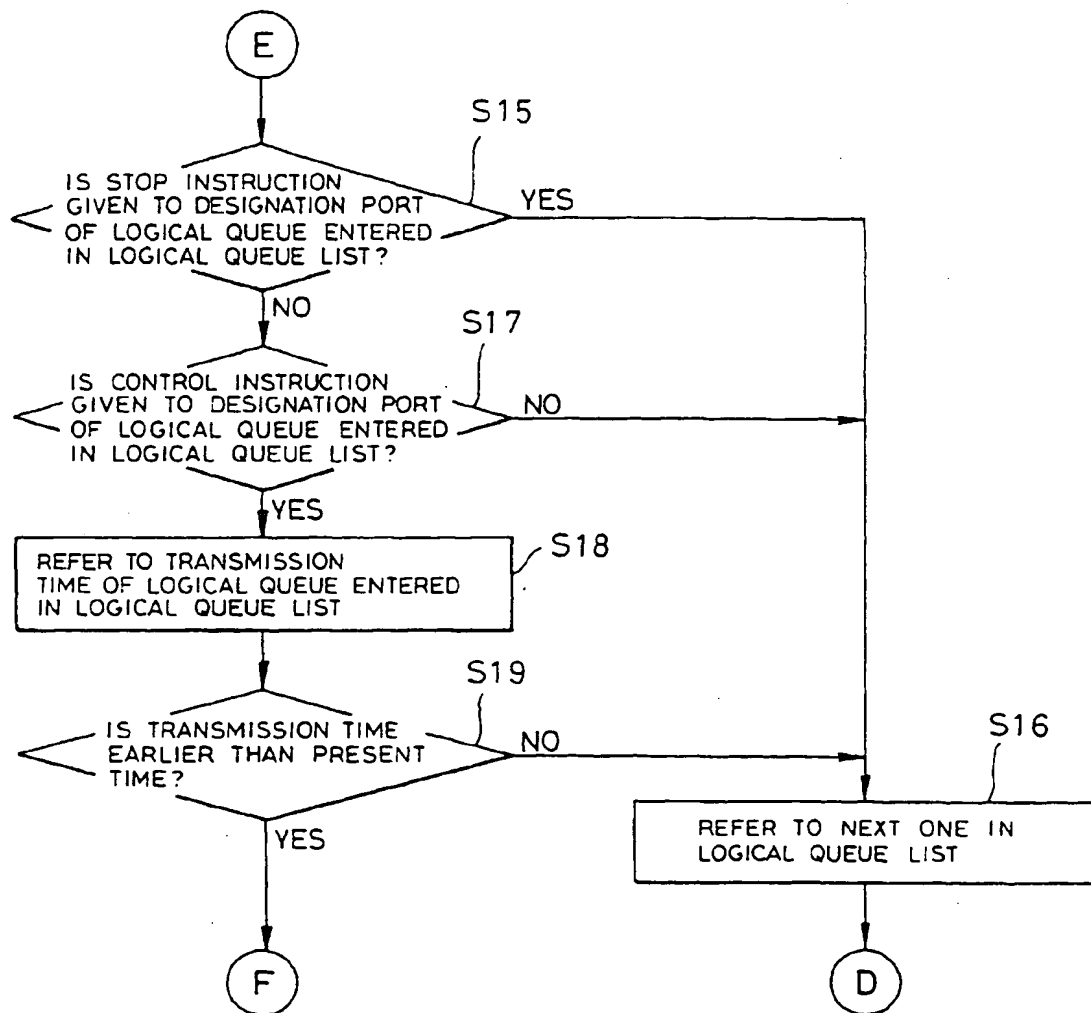


FIG. 7C

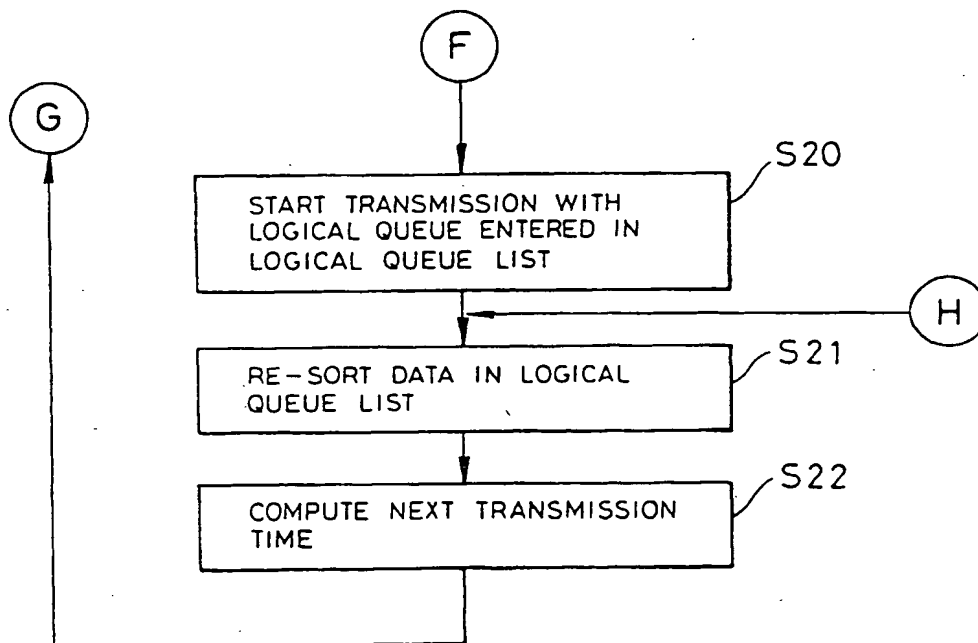


FIG. 8

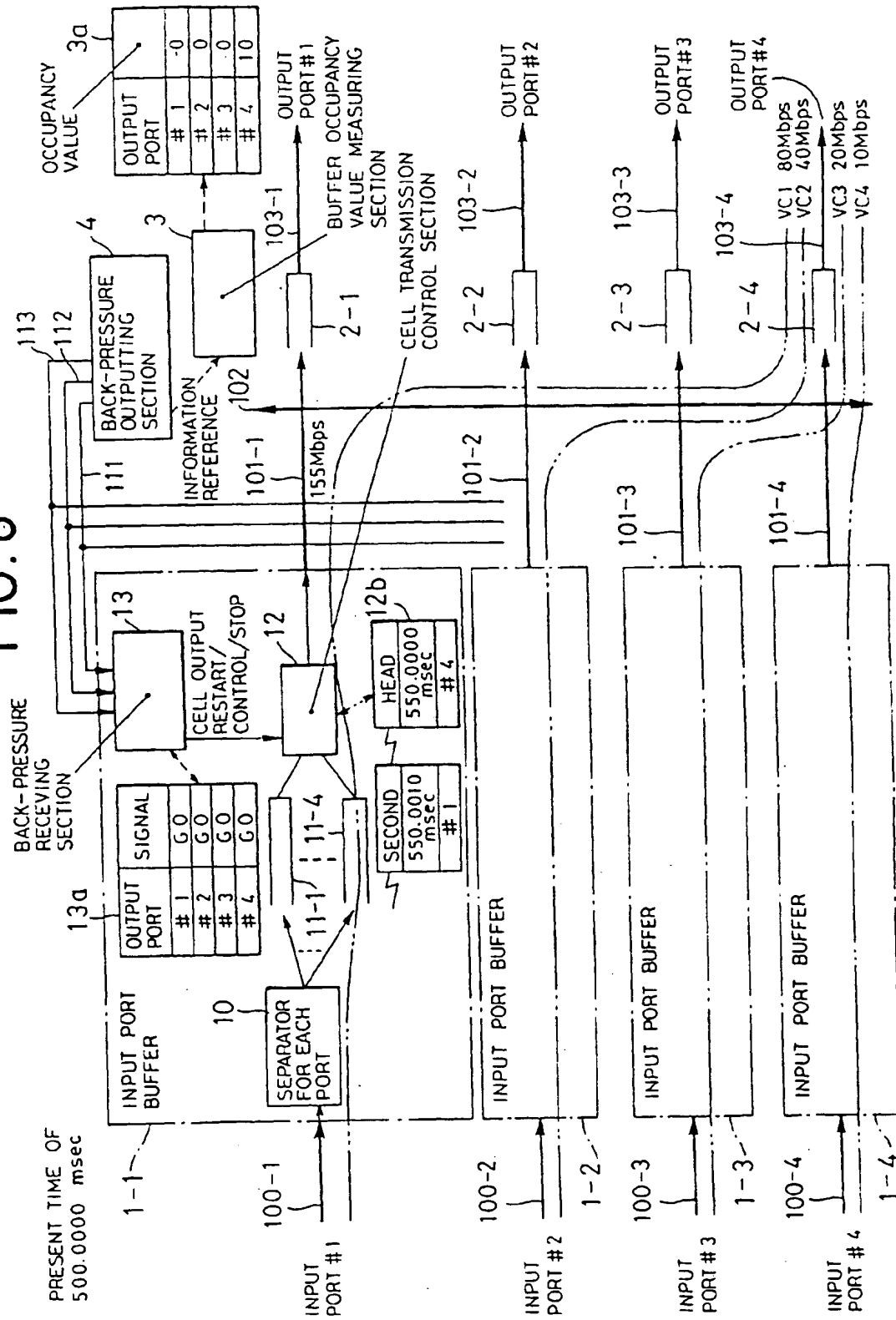


FIG. 9

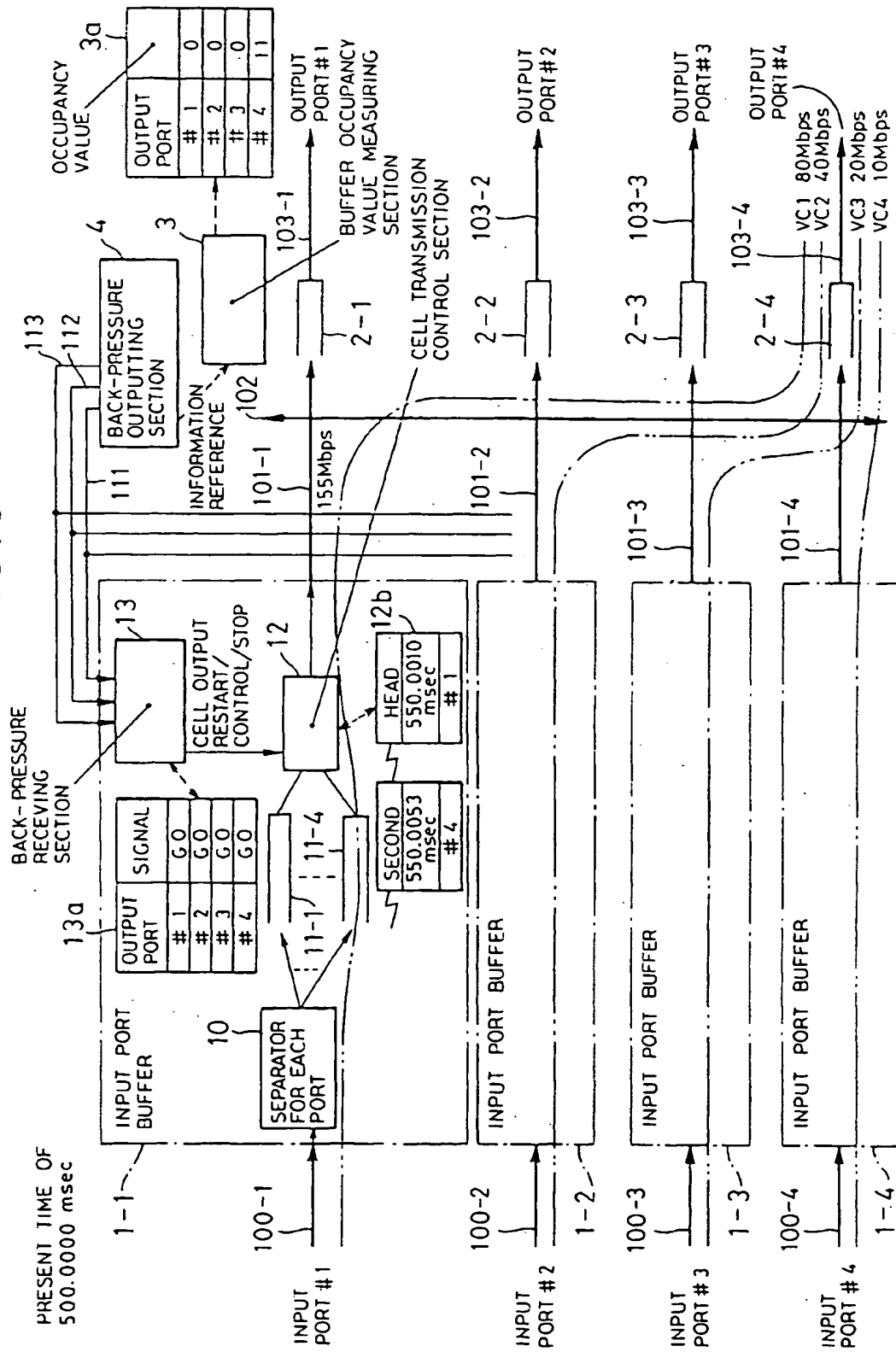


FIG.10

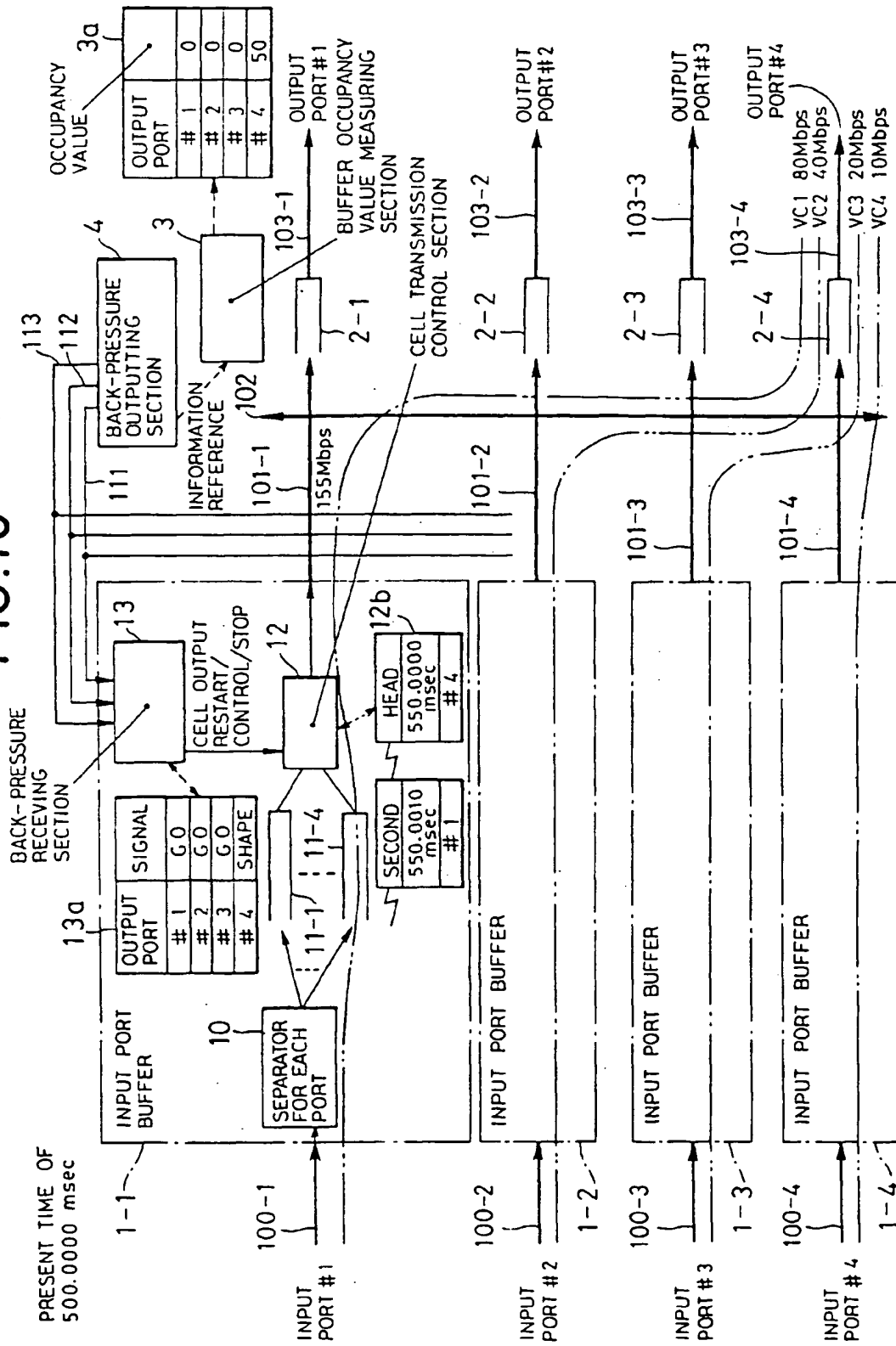


FIG.11

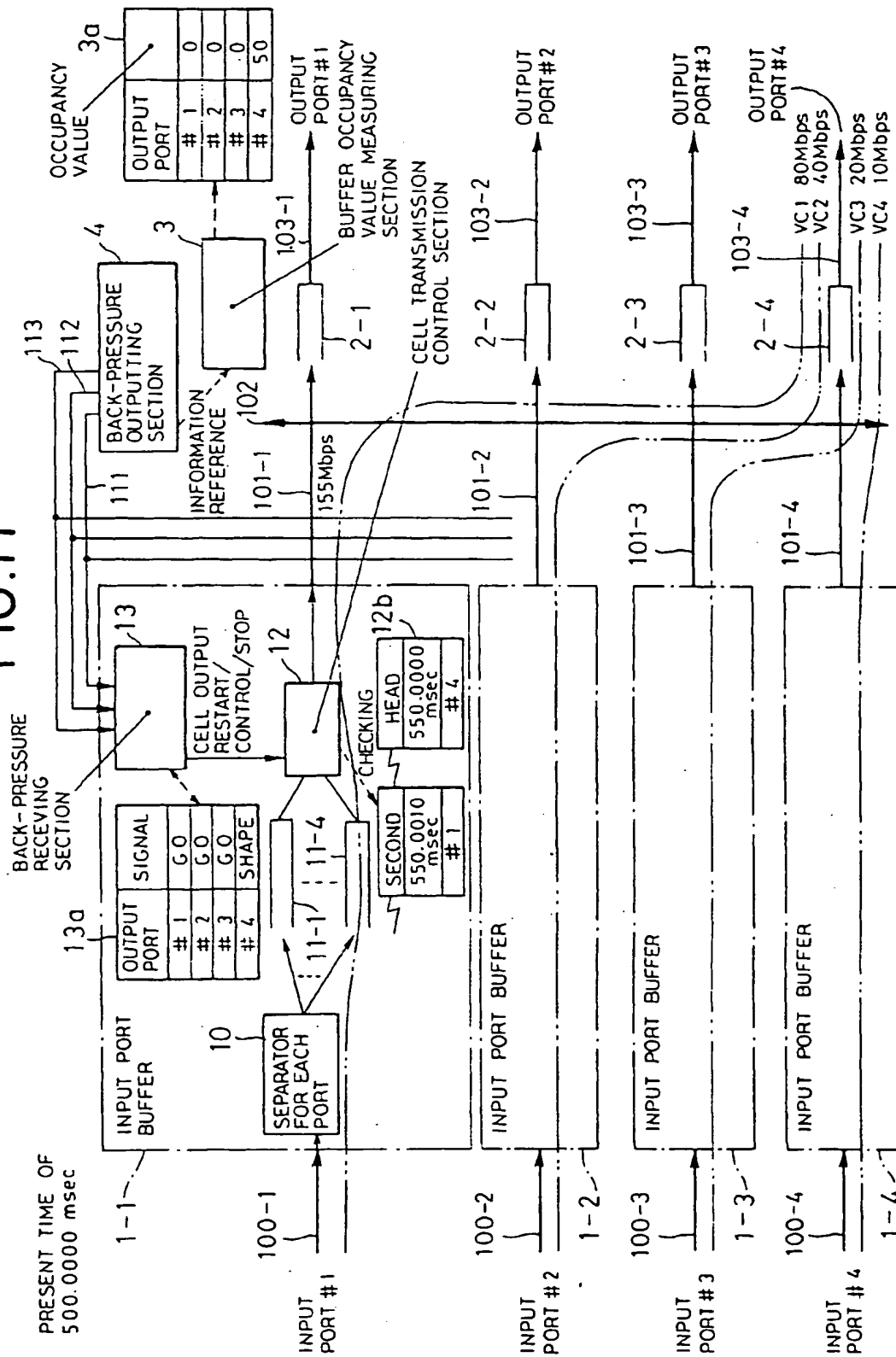


FIG. 12

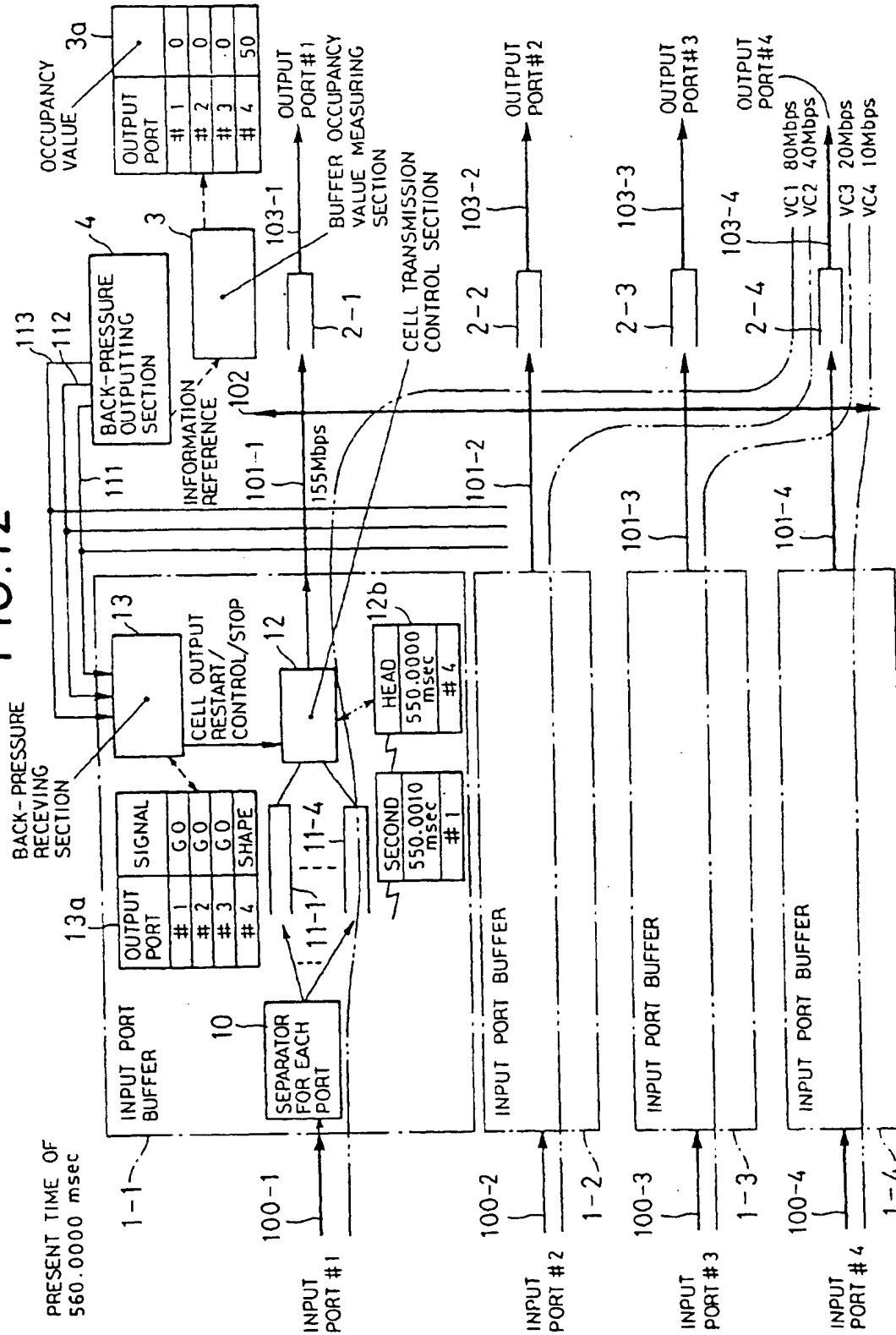


FIG.13

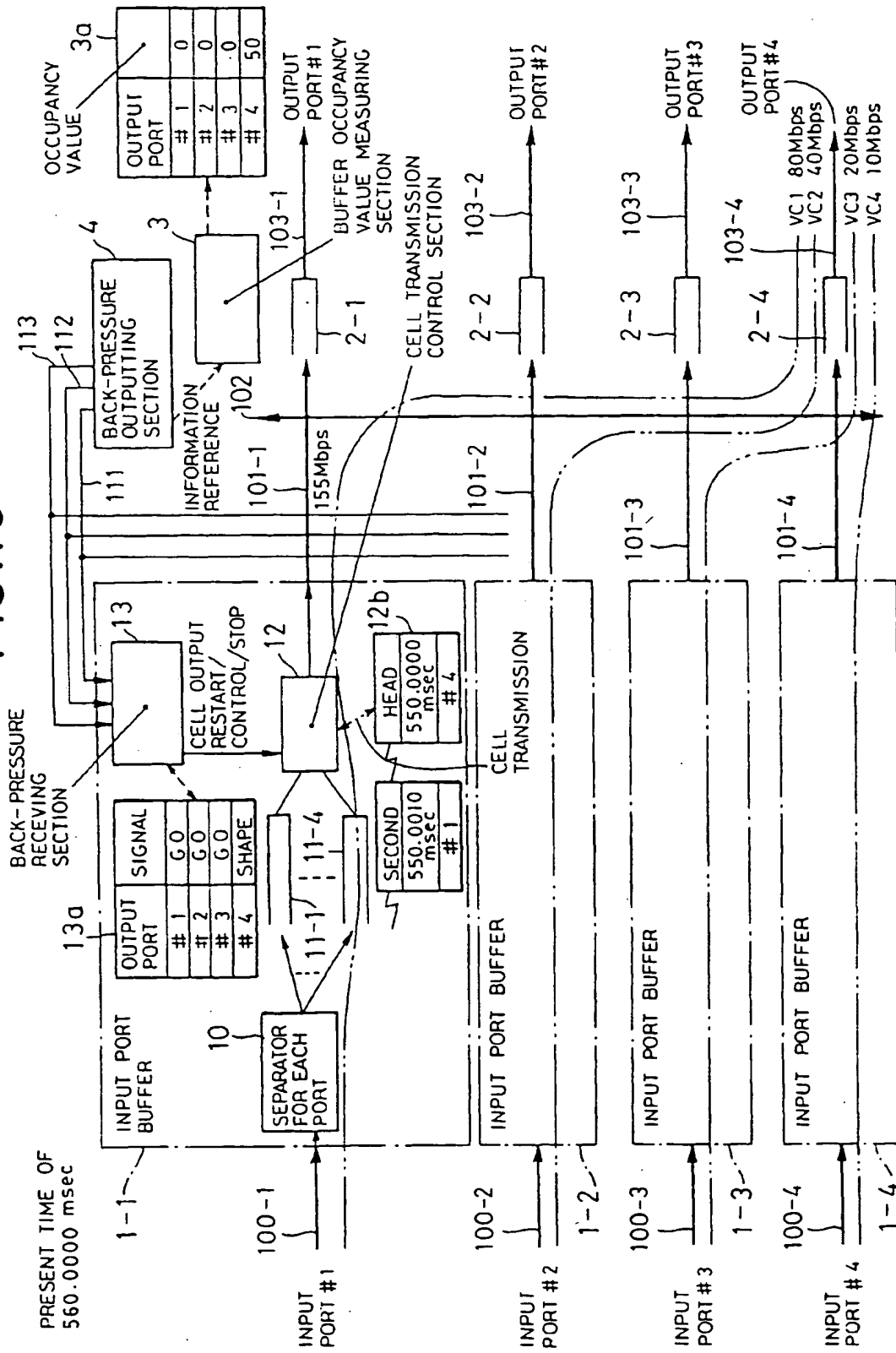


FIG.14

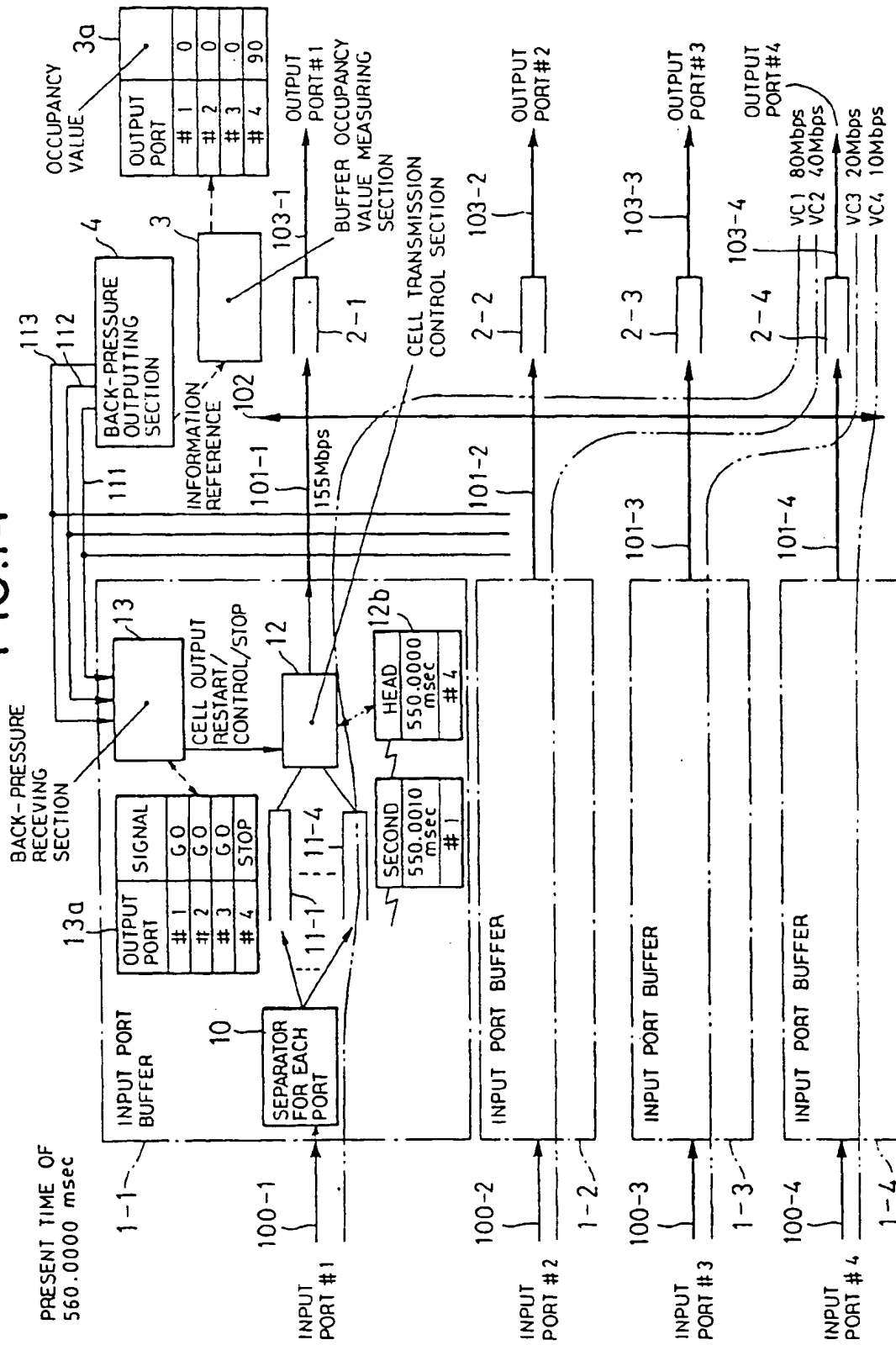


FIG. 15

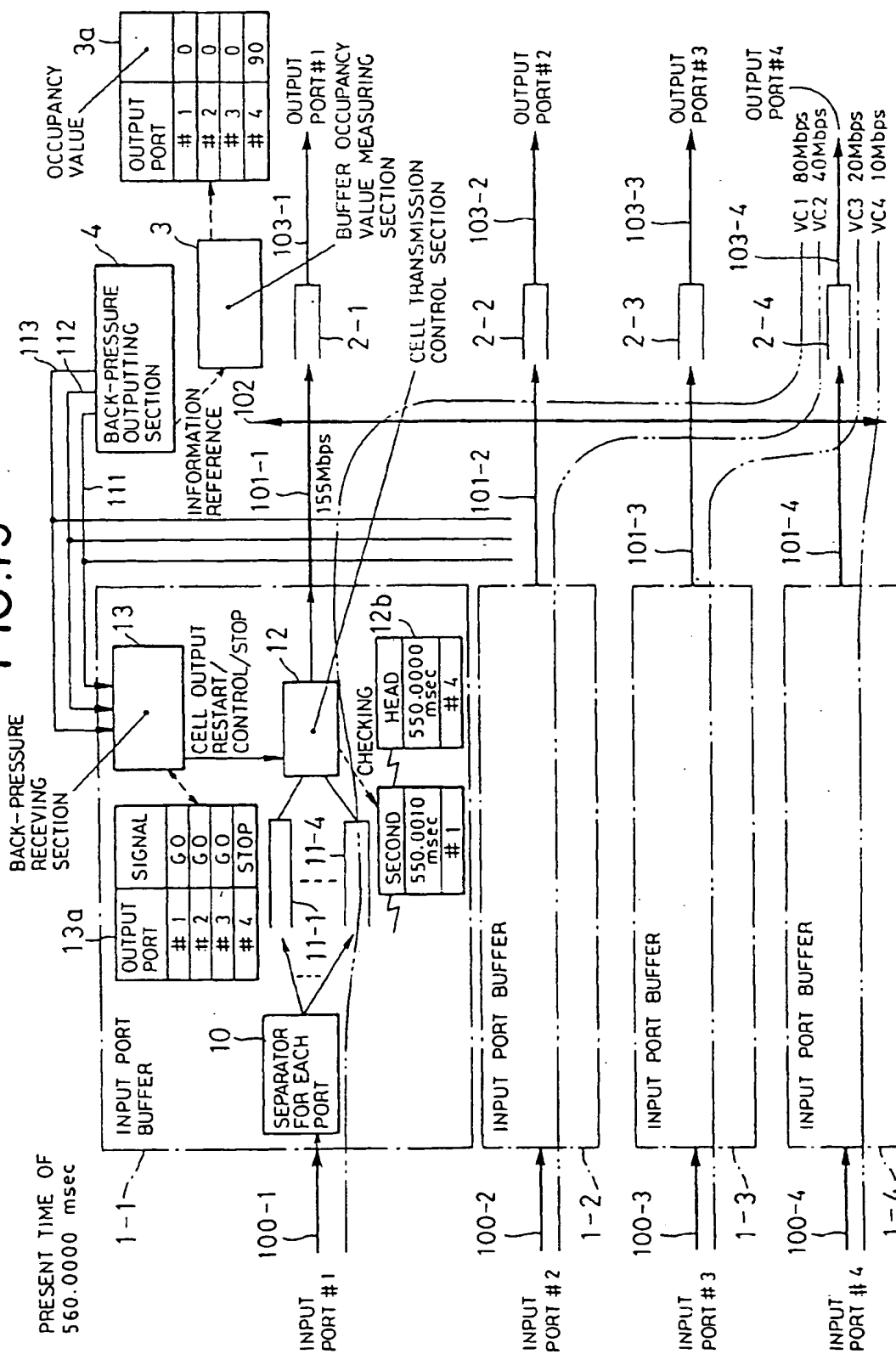


FIG.16

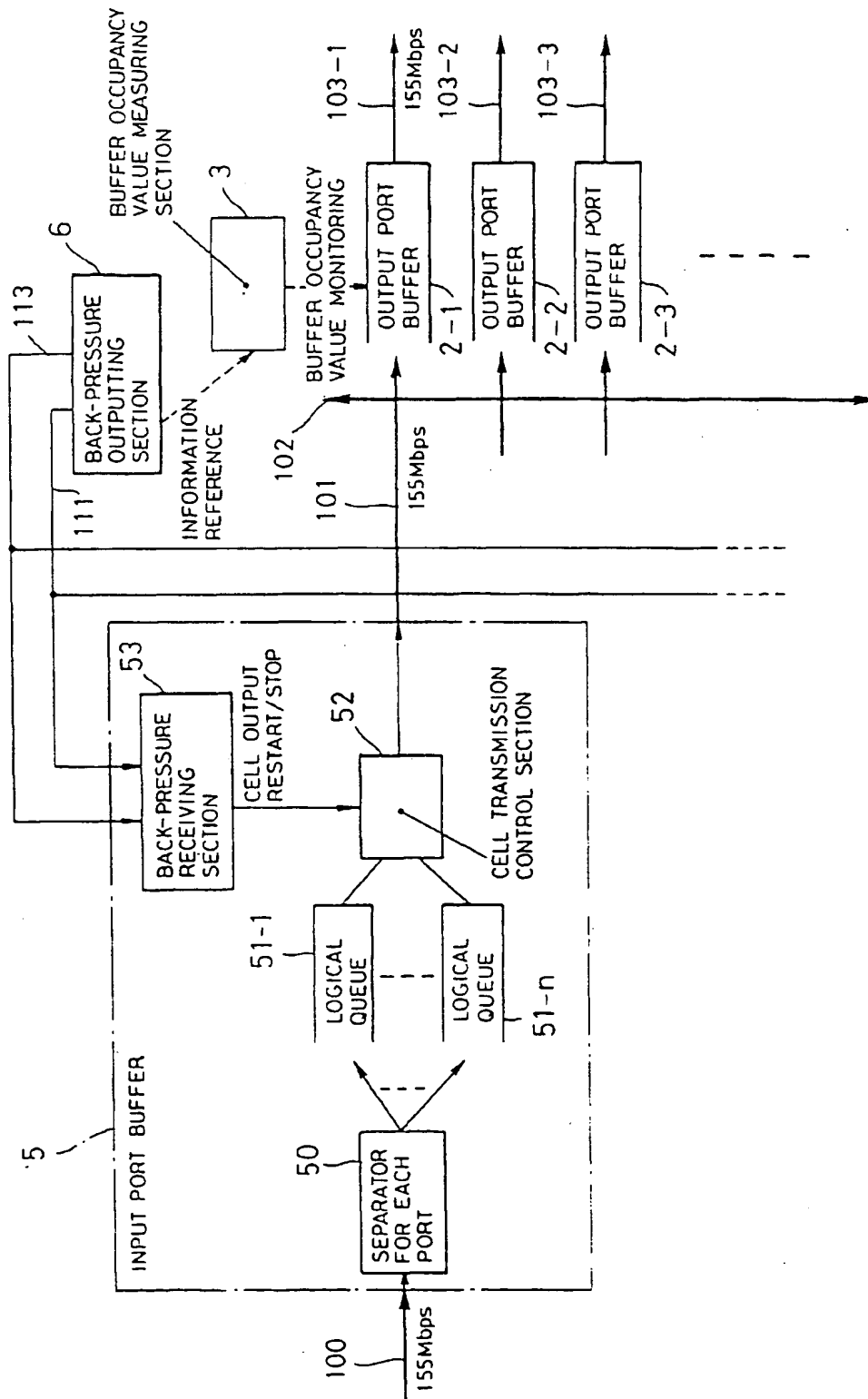
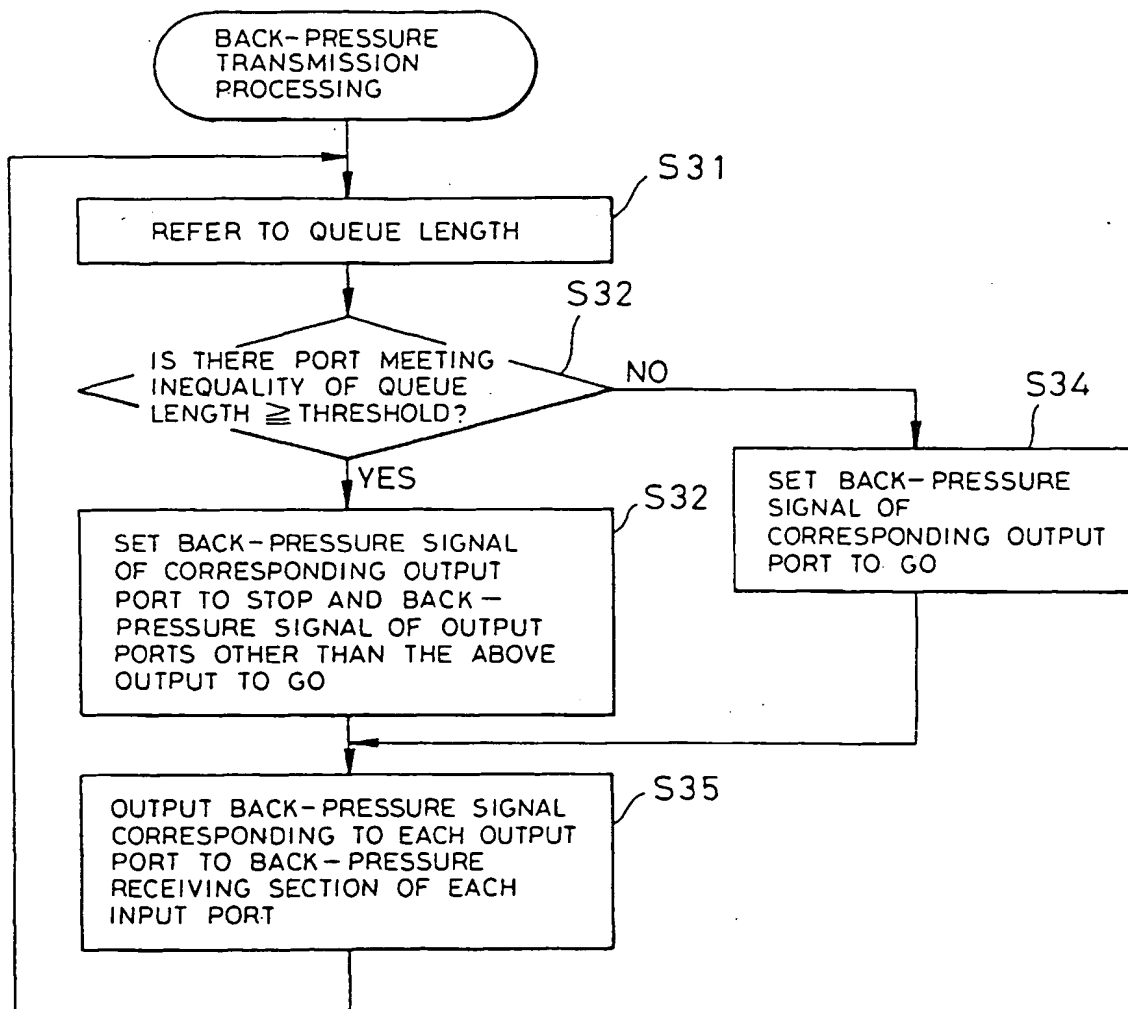


FIG.17



THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)



(11) **EP 0 853 441 A3**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(88) Date of publication A3:
16.06.1999 Bulletin 1999/24

(51) Int Cl.⁶: **H04Q 11/04, H04L 12/56**

(43) Date of publication A2:
15.07.1998 Bulletin 1998/29

(21) Application number: **97309154.9**

(22) Date of filing: **13.11.1997**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE CH DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU MC
 NL PT SE**
 Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(72) Inventor: **Shinohara, Masayuki**
Minato-ku, Tokyo (JP)

(74) Representative: **Molr, Michael Christopher et al**
Mathys & Squire
100 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8AL (GB)

(30) Priority: **13.11.1996 JP 30074496**

(71) Applicant: **NEC CORPORATION**
Tokyo (JP)

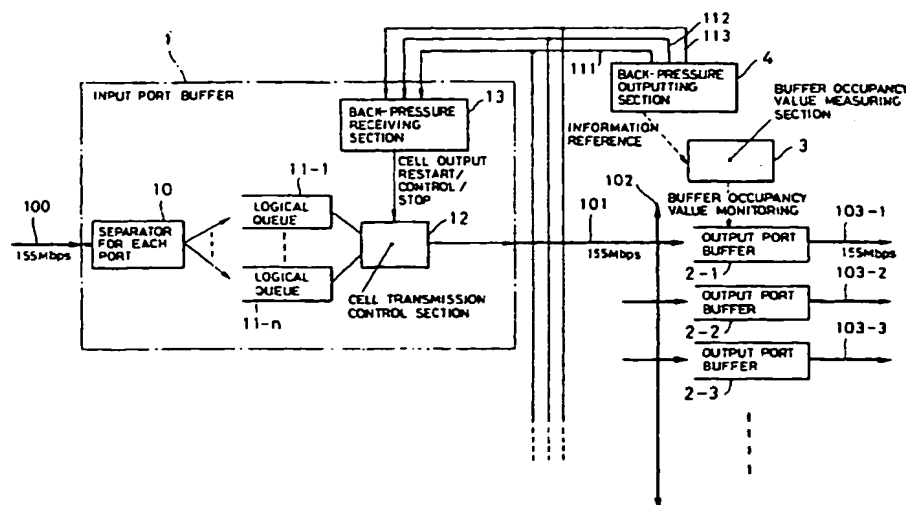
(54) **Switch control circuit and switch control method of ATM switchboard**

(57) Traffic control for controlling the occurrence of congestion in an ATM switchboard and assuring the throughput of VCs using the same output port.

A buffer occupancy value measuring section measures the queue length of each output port buffer and stores the data in a buffer occupancy value table. A back-pressure outputting section outputs a transmission restart signal when a queue length in the buffer occupancy table is equal to or less than a first threshold, a transmission control signal when the queue length is

between the first threshold and a second threshold, and a transmission stop signal when the queue length is equal to or more than the second threshold as the appropriate back pressure signal. A cell transmission control section transmits an ATM cell without comparing the cell transmission time with the present time if the instruction of a back pressure signal corresponding to a destination port indicates "restart" and transmits an ATM cell only if the transmission time is earlier than the present time if the instruction indicates "control".

FIG.1



EP 0 853 441 A3



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 30 9154

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
Y	EP 0 603 916 A (NIPPON ELECTRIC CO) 29 June 1994	1-3,8,13	H04Q11/04 H04L12/56
A	* abstract * * column 2, line 1-38 *	14	
Y	EP 0 661 851 A (NIPPON ELECTRIC CO) 5 July 1995	1-3,8,13	
A	* abstract *	14	
A	EP 0 706 297 A (IBM) 10 April 1996 * abstract *	14	
P,X	MARK B L ET AL: "LARGE CAPACITY MULTICLASS ATM CORE SWITCH ARCHITECTURE" ISS '97. WORLD TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONGRESS. (INTERNATIONAL SWITCHING SYMPOSIUM), GLOBAL NETWORK EVOLUTION: CONVERGENCE OR COLLISION? TORONTO, SEPT. 21 - 26, 1997, vol. 1, 21 September 1997, ABE S ET AL, pages 417-423, XP000720547 * the whole document *	1,13,14	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			H04L
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 27 April 1999	Examiner Dhondt, E
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T: theory or principle underlying the invention E: earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D: document cited in the application L: document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X: particularly relevant if taken alone Y: particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A: technological background O: non-written disclosure P: intermediate document			

EPN FORM 1501 03/82 (P04C01)

ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

EP 97 30 9154

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

27-04-1999

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP 0603916 A	29-06-94	JP 2655464 B	17-09-97
		JP 6197128 A	15-07-94
		CA 2112528 A	26-06-94
		US 5412648 A	02-05-95

EP 0661851 A	05-07-95	JP 2639335 B	13-08-97
		JP 7183886 A	21-07-95
		CA 2138695 A	23-06-95
		US 5719853 A	17-02-98

EP 0706297 A	10-04-96	US 5790522 A	04-08-98

EPO FORM P0459

For more details about this annex . see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82

This Page Blank (uspto)